

The Bible student will notice the attitude that conforms God to man’s image is idolatry. Typical paganism has multiple gods. The people we are talking about (many of our friends and family), have one god that fits all. The Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Lutheran, and good Catholic are all acceptable to God—in their mind. He is a multi-cultural, pluralistic God.

Contrary to this erroneous thinking, the Word of God states that He is strict, narrow, and has one truth for all men (Matt. 7:13, 14). “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). There is only one faith, not many, just as surely as there is one Savior (Eph. 4:4-6).

Let us not try to conform God to our image, but let us be conformed to His.

- Steven F. Deaton

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Baptism, Who Needs Baptism?

Not everyone needs to be baptized. Babies do not need to be baptized; neither do those who are mentally handicap. Those who have already been scripturally baptized do not need to do it again. Rather, only those who are accountable and have not been scripturally baptized need to do it—which means a whole lot of people need to.

The Bible is plain about faith, repentance, and confession (Jn. 3:16; Lk. 13:3; 12: 8, 9). Our friends and neighbors rarely deny the need for any of these. In fact, some may even insist their essentiality to salvation. They may even tell people that without faith, repentance, and confession, they will go to hell. However, they not only deny the necessity of baptism, but adamantly argue against it as the Bible teaches it.

The Word of God states that baptism is essential to salvation, to have one’s sins remitted. The passages and arguments supporting this are as plain as the ones advocating the requirement of faith.

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38).

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26, 27).

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David's Distress

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:11, 12).

“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21).

To deny the necessity of baptism for the salvation of the soul is to deny the inspired Word of God. You might as well say, “God, you are wrong about that. I am amending your message to say, ‘Only faith, repentance, and confession are necessary to go to heaven (1 Opinions 1:1).’” This is the height of rebellion and arrogance.

Truthfully, people need help misunderstanding the Bible's teaching on baptism. Either they grew up listening to false doctrine and simply do not know better, or they have gone to false teachers with their sweet-as-honey lies that make the gospel more palatable for men. Some do not want to accept that those who have not been baptized are going to lose their souls. Yet, we cannot alter God's Word—it is His plan of salvation, not ours.

- Steven F. Deaton

Conformed To Our Image

The Bible teaches that man was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). As such, we are inferior to Him. He is the Creator, we are the creatures, and therefore subject to His will. However, some do not see it that way.

People want God to conform to their image. They do not want a God of wrath, so they believe He is all love. They do not want a God who is strict and narrow-minded, so their God is one who is permissive and tolerant of a wide range of behavior—including small infractions of morality. They want a God who will accept their worship, no matter what, so they have a God who rejoices in man-made homage.

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How would you feel and what would you do if your son turned against you, convinced others that you are worthless, including one of your closest friends? Would you wallow in self-pity, consider killing yourself, or take it out on the rest of your family? Would you become angry with God and decide to live life your way?

David faced the treachery of his beloved son Absalom who “stole the hearts of Israel” as he ran his father from the throne (2 Sam. 15-18). Absalom would have killed David if given the opportunity. He took the capital city and David's wives. David ran to the wilderness and sought refuge in God. He penned Psalm 63 during this time.

[A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah.]

O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. But those who seek my life, to destroy it, Shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

We need to learn to trust in God when a great crisis hits us. We can do this by trusting in God at all times, as David did. Let us wake daily with the knowledge that God is for us, not against us. He will not forsake us. Rather, the Lord will uphold us and sustain us in any circumstance. It is simply up to us to turn to Him.

- Steven F. Deaton